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DO/S 61-2857

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21 August 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Honorable McGeorge Bundy
Special Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

SUBJECT: CIA Occupancy of the New Building in
McLean, Virginia (Recommendation
by the President's Foreign Intelligence
Advisory Board of 18 July, 1961)

In your memorandum of July 24 you transmitted to me for comment, before its submission to the President, the following recommendation of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board in its report to the President of 18 July 1961:

"The Board recommends that action should be taken at the earliest possible date to assure that the Central Intelligence Agency's plans for the occupancy of the new building in McLean, Virginia are feasible. (We believe there are valid questions that may be raised about these plans. In particular, there are questions about moving all of the clandestine activities into the building. We recommend accordingly that these plans be reviewed administratively, and that a feasibility study be made as to the possibility of housing all of the clandestine functions, or some part thereof, in another place. We believe it may be appropriate to house in the new building some of the non-clandestine functions of the Central Intelligence Agency which are now scheduled to be relocated to other buildings in Washington)."

The points which the Board has raised in this recommendation affect a very important phase of the work of C. I. A., and I wish, at the outset, to assure you that the feasibility of our planned occupancy of the new building has been thoroughly considered and under constant review since the building program was initiated more than ten years ago.

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My comments on the Board's recommendations fall into two general categories; first, the practical problem with which we are faced today as regards the relocation of our personnel; second, the question of tradecraft in the field of our clandestine functions.

I.

Since 1951 the Agency has been planning the construction of a building which would house the major part of our headquarters personnel. This project was initiated after careful consideration of the security and other factors involved in this procedure. The original decision to proceed was reached by General Walter Bedell Smith, who was then Director, at a time when, as now, our activities were scattered among some ☐ buildings, for the most part of temporary construction.

In presenting the matter to the Congress at that time, the security risks involved in transporting classified documents between buildings and the physical insecurity of the temporary buildings themselves were stressed, as well as the economy and efficiency of operations from a single headquarters building. As a result of this presentation, the Congress on 28 September 1951, passed an authorizing measure for \$38 million.

Due to a technicality, the appropriating action failed of passage and it was not until 1 July 1955, after a site had been selected and approved by the appropriate authorities, that the President renewed the request to the Congress for the necessary legislation. On 4 August 1955 the Congress appropriated funds for the preparation of plans and specifications and in 1956, the Congress appropriated the funds to complete the building and the access highways.

As the printed hearings before the Senate Appropriations Committee evidence, the entire question of the security of the Agency's operations was gone into in great detail. The pros and cons of the location of our headquarters clandestine services personnel in one building, which we in the Agency had been studying for many years, were carefully considered by the members of Congress directly concerned. It was clearly the understanding of the Congress in making the appropriation for our headquarters that these personnel would be included in the new building.

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We know of no building in the Washington area available and suitable for the occupancy of our headquarters clandestine personnel. We do not feel that it would now be possible to approach the Congress for funds for a new building. Certainly there is no structure which could be made available in the time that remains before the "tempor" which the clandestine services now occupy must be torn down. Under the applicable legislation, an equivalent amount of temporary construction including those now occupied by the clandestine personnel is to be demolished once our new building is completed. Furthermore, these particular temporary buildings are fast becoming uninhabitable.

Hence, we are forced to the conclusion that there is really no practical alternative to follow, initially at least, other than to house the major part of the headquarters personnel of the clandestine services in the new building, beginning in about a month from now.

In addition, because of the common services on which the various divisions of the clandestine services depend such as directing personnel, files and records, logistics, supporting staff elements, etc., it is not feasible to fragment the clandestine service's operational headquarters without serious loss of both efficiency and security.

Our security office, which we consider highly professional, has assured me that the protection from disclosure of our clandestine work and personnel can be far more effectively guarded in the new building than has been possible in the old buildings the clandestine services have been occupying. The new building will provide electronic data processing, a secure telephone system, a specialized signal center, a pneumatic tube system, classified waste disposal and other modern facilities which will add both efficiency and security to our work that no other available building would afford.

We wish to make it clear that we are not, as suggested in the Board's report, "moving all of the clandestine activities into the building". We are moving the operational headquarters personnel who deal on a worldwide basis with our clandestine activities and rotate between headquarters and the field. Truly clandestine operations which involve agent contacts and the like are conducted outside of identifiable agency buildings as explained more fully below.

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In the light of the Board's recommendation, we will review, again, before the move takes place, the desirability of excepting from the move any particular individuals in the clandestine services whose anonymity must be maintained and who could effectively be located elsewhere.

Finally from the viewpoint of security, it should be added that there would be no possibility whatever of maintaining for any length of time the secrecy of a building housing the more than persons comprising our clandestine service headquarters personnel. Once discovered and advertised in our press, as must be expected, the security situation of the clandestine services personnel housed in such a building would be more severely prejudiced and more a target for publicity than at the proposed new location where they are co-located with a large number of non-clandestine personnel. Furthermore the proposed relocation of our personnel is now no longer "news".

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No clandestine service in the world of any size has succeeded in keeping its main headquarters unknown and unidentified to those hostile foreign services seriously engaged in trying to locate and penetrate it. Few have had any success even in maintaining the anonymity of the personnel in these headquarters.

In this work we have made it a rule not to waste time in trying to conceal the obvious but to exercise all our ingenuity in concealing what can and should be concealed, namely clandestine intelligence operations.

II.

I now turn from the practical problems we face in connection with the relocation of our clandestine personnel to the question of tradecraft.

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